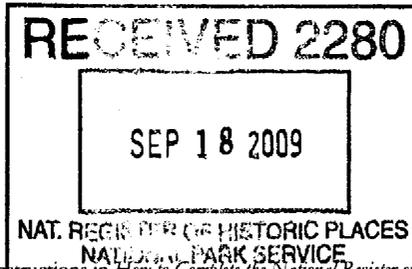


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

863



National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Peale's Barber Farm Mastodon Exhumation Site

other name/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & town Route 17K  not for publication

city or town Montgomery  vicinity

state New York code NY county Orange code 067 zip code 12586

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property

meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant

nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Roger A. Perpoint / DSHPO 8/28/09  
 Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of the Keeper

10/20/09  
 Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(check only one box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

public-local

private

public-State

public-Federal

district

building(s)

site

structure

object

Contributing

Noncontributing

\_\_\_\_\_

1

\_\_\_\_\_

1

Buildings

Sites

Structures

Objects

Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Function**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Current Function**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE: unoccupied land

LANDSCAPE: unoccupied land

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

foundation \_\_\_\_\_

walls \_\_\_\_\_

roof \_\_\_\_\_

other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**  
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheets-

\_\_\_\_\_

**8. Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Areas of Significance**

(enter categories from instructions)

SCIENCE

OTHER: PALEONTOLOGY

**Period of Significance**

1801

**Significant Dates**

1801

**Significant Persons**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

N/A

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property 2.06 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

1 18 565271 4597504  
Zone Easting Northing

2  
Zone Easting Northing

3  
Zone Easting Northing

4  
Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title William E. Krattinger (contact, NY S OPRHP); Katherine Woltz; Evan Galbraith; Joseph Devine  
organization NYS OPRHP, Field Services Bureau date April 2009  
street & number Peebles Island State Park telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Waterford state NY zip code 12866

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black & white** photographs of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name/title Evan Galbraith (with James Brooks)  
street & number 118 Tower Hill Road telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Tuxedo Park state NY zip code 10987

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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## 7. Narrative Description

### *Location, Setting & Site Description*

Peale's Barber Farm Mastodon Exhumation Site is located on the north side of New York Route 17K, opposite Valley Central Middle and High School and east of the Village of Montgomery, in Orange County, New York. The site is 2.06 acres in size and without buildings or structures, though a residential development is planned for portions of the adjoining property in the immediate future. The site is largely defined by a small, spring-fed pond—the flooded remains of the August 1801 excavation site, a marl bog—which is ringed with natural growth and bordered on the southeastern side by a pronounced hill feature. The surrounding landscape is characterized by gently rolling topography and stands of deciduous trees, though to the immediate north of the nominated pond the landscape is largely open and devoid of trees. The original alignment of the drainage trench utilized to empty the marl bog at the time of Peale's 1801 excavation is currently readable on the landscape, though altered from its original condition with the introduction of a plastic culvert pipe, and is now buried; the alignment runs in a northwesterly direction from the pond before spilling into a marshy area in the adjacent woods. The drainage trench is visible in GIS aerial images taken in 2001 and 2004.

### *Site Identification*

Efforts to identify the Barber Farm site excavated by Peale in 1801 commenced in 2004, beginning with an investigation of the accuracy of information presented on a historical marker on Route 17K, located at that road's intersection with Bailey Road east of the Village of Montgomery; local historian Joe Devine, at the request of the Village historian Marion Wile, undertook this work. The text of this marker, which contains a number of factual errors, reads as follows:

Mastadon Dig 1800  
1<sup>st</sup> U.S. Scientific Expedition  
Remains Exhibited London and American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia  
Dig painted by Charles Peale 1810  
HMA Montgomery House<sup>1</sup>

Period accounts by C.W. Peale's son Rembrandt Peale (1802) and others indicated that the Barber Farm excavation site, one of three such sites related to the 1801 Peale expedition, was located in close proximity to the Newburgh Turnpike, later the Cohecton Turnpike and later still Route 17K. Local historical sources held that the site was located east of the Village of Montgomery and west of present-day Route 208, somewhere south of the Wallkill River. Utilizing the well-known 1922 New York State Museum publication by C.A. Hartnagel and Herman Bishop, *The Mastodonts, Mammoths and other Pleistocene Mammals of New York State*—which included a map documenting all the known 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century mastodon finds in Orange County—the precise location of the Barber farm excavation site was identified. Next, aerial ortho-photography and wetland maps were consulted, followed by digital elevation models of the area, which were particularly useful given that the site's topography, and the

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<sup>1</sup> Errors include the incorrect year of the excavation—1801 and not 1800 as stated—and the misspelling of the word mastodon.

Property Name *Peale's Barber Farm Mastodon Exhumation Site*  
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method used to drain the site, had been described in period accounts such as the 1802 account by Rembrandt Peale. Historical maps were also consulted in order to identify 19<sup>th</sup> century farms, boundaries, and roadways.

In order to begin the search for the actual site, Devine overlaid two-foot contours derived from New York State GIS Digital Elevation Models to create the geographical coordinates for a search area; this was then overlaid on a Walden Quadrangle map, in order to establish the most fruitful potential areas to investigate. In summer 2004, physical investigations of the landscape were initiated; it was presumed that the site of the excavation was likely now a pond, since the historical record indicated that the marl substance from the original 1801 exhumation site was used by farmers to fertilize their fields. The site was soon thereafter identified by Devine and his grandson. It consisted of a small pond from which extended a linear—and man-made— drainage trench that conveyed water away from it, clearly built for that specific function. This location was referenced with the existing historical data, including the account of Orange County's first historian Samuel Eager, who witnessed the excavations at the Barber farm, and who indicated that in the 1840s this property was owned by Dr. Charles Fowler, one mile east of the village. The 1859 French, Wood & Beer's map of Orange and Rockland counties was referenced, which indicated the location of the Fowler farm east of present-day Bailey Road—the same location as the site. Given the physical characteristics of the site, particularly the drainage trench, and the site's compatibility with the corresponding historical data including period accounts and mapping, there remains little if any question that this is the site of the August 1801 excavation conducted by Peale and his team on the Barber farm.

Efforts to identify the other two sites excavated by Peale in 1801—the Masten farm and the Millspaw farm—have likewise been conducted. The former is in the Town of Newburgh and the latter in the Town of Crawford, both likewise in Orange County. The Masten Farm site is believed to be in the general proximity of Brookside pond, near the Target shopping plaza; the other is believed to be east of the hamlet of Bullville on Route 17K, though encompassing a much more extensive area than the other two. Research into the location of these two other excavation sites is being conducted, with the assistance of local historians; however, since both sites are much larger and offer no pinpoint location reference, only a general site identification—within perhaps 50 yards—is anticipated.

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## 8. Narrative Statement of Significance

### *Synopsis*

The exhumation and subsequent reconstruction of mastodon skeletal remains from this and two other Orange County, New York sites, an endeavor conducted in the summer months of 1801 under the direction of the noted artist and scientist Charles Willson Peale (1741-1827), garnered considerable attention on the national—and international—stage. Peale's undertaking, sponsored by the American Philosophical Society of Philadelphia and lent logistical and material support by the Federal government at President Thomas Jefferson's request, was of great scientific and cultural importance to the United States in the opening years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup> This effort provided for the creation of the world's first fully articulated prehistoric skeleton, a mastodon, and offered scientists a model of this extinct mammal for comparative analysis with other species. The work undertaken by Peale and his associates at this time likewise was central to the formulation of the theory of extinction; the Orange County expedition was in large measure predicated on the desire to explain, what in fact, this "mammoth" creature was. Prior to Peale's discovery, prehistoric bones had been found in the Hudson Valley and elsewhere, but these individual and unidentified fragments resulted primarily in speculation motivated, to some extent, by religious superstition. Peale's 1801 expedition was inspired by the discovery of unusual skeletal remains at a number of area farms in the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, including that of Captain Joseph Barber, who in 1793 unearthed a small number of mastodon rib bones while digging marl on his property. This and other such discoveries, like the bones unearthed on the farm of Reverend Robert Annan around 1780—remains that were subsequently viewed by General George Washington and other Continental army officers stationed at Newburgh and New Windsor during the war—generated considerable interest in this subject and helped spur the Peale expedition. Of the scores of local citizens that took an avid interest in Peale's exertions in 1801 was a young schoolboy, Samuel W. Eager, who witnessed firsthand the excavation work at the Barber farm, the nominated site. Eager later authored *An Outline History of Orange County*, 1846-47, devoting a chapter on the mastodon and the various Orange County discoveries that aroused such great interest in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and also served as the county's first historian. Peale's 1801 effort included a preliminary trip to the area in the spring, followed by a more extensive expedition that summer, the latter focusing on three area sites in the present-day towns of Newburgh, Montgomery, and Crawford. The summer expedition yielded enough remains to round out those bones previously collected and allowed him to form two essentially complete skeletons. One of the two reassembled mastodon skeletons was first exhibited in Philadelphia on Christmas Eve 1801, to great fanfare. Today the one remaining mastodon skeleton—that first assembled—is exhibited at the *Hessisches Landemuseum* in Darmstadt, Germany. The other was destroyed by fire in Baltimore, Maryland in 1850.

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<sup>1</sup> See C.W. Peale to Jefferson, 24 July 1801, in Lillian Miller et al, eds., *Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family*, vol. 2, pt. 1 (New Haven and Washington DC: Yale University Press and the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 1988), 348; Jefferson to C.W. Peale, 29 July 1801, in Barbara B. Oberg et al, eds. *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* 34 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 686; "Special Meeting" called on 24 July 1801, in "Manuscript Minutes of the American Philosophical Society," *Early Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* (Philadelphia: McCalla and Stavely, 1884), 313-14.; C. W. Peale to Jefferson, 11 October 1801, in Oberg et al, *Papers of Thomas Jefferson* 35 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 430-36. C.W. Peale's account of the expedition is found in his Diary, nos. 18 and 19, reprinted in Miller et al., *Peale Papers*, 313-34, 350-71; Peale later elaborated on this account in his *Autobiography*, written between 1825 and 1826. See *ibid.*, Miller et al., eds., *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family*, vol. 5 (New Haven and Washington DC: Yale University Press and National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 2000), 278-307. A majority of the source material used to support the specific themes of this nomination was supplied by Katherine Woltz, University of Virginia.

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National awareness of the mastodon remains recovered in Orange County and subsequently assembled and displayed by C.W. Peale in his Philadelphia museum, and taken to Europe the following year by his sons Rembrandt and Rubens Peale,<sup>2</sup> is illustrated by President Thomas Jefferson's correspondence with Peale on the subject, Jefferson's granting of Federal assistance to the summer 1801 expedition, his own attempts to acquire Hudson Valley mastodon bones, and likewise his directive to explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark in 1804 to find other examples of the mammoth during their explorations of the post-Louisiana Purchase American West. Jefferson had previously referenced the mammoth in his *Notes on the State of Virginia* in his effort to debunk the French naturalist Comte de Buffon's theory of American Degeneracy, which held that mammals would reduce in size and vigor over the course of several generations due to poor environmental factors once introduced in North America. Buffon's theory, which proved a springboard for related theories such as that promoted by Abbe Raynal—who extended it to include European-born settlers—undermined the young nation's legitimacy on the international stage, rousing the passions of Jefferson, among others.<sup>3</sup> The mastodon remains unearthed in Orange County formed an important, if not watershed event, in this international debate, by providing the first essentially complete skeletons of this prehistoric mammal. As such, the discovery of mastodon bones made in the Montgomery area in the last decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which reached their high-water mark with Peale's summer 1801 expedition, were relevant to a national dialogue. They offered important data for the scientific community while likewise contributing to a shared American national identity in an age of cultural exploration and self definition. It should also be noted that, in addition to serving as a landmark event in the birth of American paleontology, Peale's expedition represented the first American scientific expedition ever conducted, receiving as it did modest Federal assistance, and pre-dating Western expeditions such as those conducted by John Sibley, William Dunbar, and Lewis and Clark. This event further represented the first successful expedition in what proved an international quest to find the first complete skeleton of the unknown animal known as the "mammoth," as parties in France, Germany, Spain, England and America had sought to locate further remains of this species since the 1730s.

The Pleistocene-era mammal that was the focus of Peale's efforts in the Hudson Valley and Jefferson's queries was known informally at the time as the American *incognitum*, or mammoth, and is today known as the American mastodon, or *Mammot Americanum*. Jefferson referred to the animal variously as the mammoth and "big buffalo" in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*; it was not until 1809 that he learned of the French naturalist Georges Cuvier's use of the term *mastodonte*, at which time the term mastodont or mastodon came into broad usage.<sup>4</sup> The term "mammoth" relates to contemporary speculation regarding the size and the unknown nature of the animal these large bones belonged to, rather than a proper scientific analysis.

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<sup>2</sup> Rembrandt and Rubens Peale exhibited the second reconstructed mastodon skeleton in England, and planned to subsequently shift the exhibit to Paris, and to that end corresponded with National Institute members who encouraged Napoleon Bonaparte to purchase it for the Louvre. However the rupture of the Treaty of Amiens forced the Peales to cancel this portion of the European tour and return to America with "Boney," the name given to the reconstructed mammoth by hostile British viewers. President Jefferson's portrait, painted by Rembrandt Peale for use on this tour, was exhibited alongside the reconstructed mammoth, boldly demonstrating his support of the project. This proved troubling for British conservatives, however, and helps account for their hostile attitude to the mastodon as they claimed Jefferson and Napoleon were political allies.

<sup>3</sup> Jefferson's counter-argument to Buffon's unflattering assessments of New World degeneration centered on the size and ferocity of the mammoth, or "incognitum" as he termed it under the heading of "Mammals" in Query VI of *Notes*. For this argument directed at Buffon, in which the mammoth was ultimately compared to the mouse, see Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* [1781-87], ed. William Peden (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, [1954]; 1982), 43-72.

<sup>4</sup> In 1767, William Hunter of the Royal Society, London, wrote a scholarly article stating that the incognitum was not an elephant, but instead a separate and distinct species. He called it the "*American incognitum*," and this was the term used by Jefferson in *Notes on the State*

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*The Montgomery Area, 1800; Area Mastodon Discoveries Gain Public Note; Peale's Preliminary Orange County Visit*  
At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, at the time of Peale's expedition into Orange County, the Montgomery area was in the process of emerging from its provincial origins, benefitting from its geographic position on the Wallkill River and likewise its position on the road east to Newburgh and the Hudson River, and soon thereafter other overland roads which connected the region with points north, south and west. This area of Orange County had witnessed its first significant settlement by Europeans in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In the 1720s Palatine Germans settled the 5,000 acre patent known as Germantown, near the present-day Village of Montgomery, known in its early years as Ward's Bridge. Soon thereafter Scots-Irish settlers came to this region, as did people of English extraction from earlier settled parts of New York and New England, adding further complexity to the early European ethnic demographic. Lutheran, German Reformed, Presbyterian, and Anglican churches were established in the town in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, serving the religious needs of these various ethnic groups. According to Samuel Eager, the eastern portion of the Town of Montgomery, extending roughly from New Windsor to the Wallkill River, was originally settled almost entirely by the Scots-Irish while the area north and west of the Wallkill River was populated largely by people of Dutch and German extraction. The Town of Montgomery, along with Newburgh, lay within Ulster County until 1798, at which time the county boundary was redrawn to include these within Orange County. Among the primary character defining features of this region, in addition to the Hudson and Wallkill rivers, are the Shawangunk Mountains, an elevated ridge that rises west of the towns of Montgomery, Newburgh and Crawford. The area that includes Montgomery was referred to by some, including Rembrandt Peale, as the Shawangunk Valley.

The road to Newburgh, after c. 1801 the eastern segment of the Cochection Turnpike that connected the Hudson and Delaware rivers, formed the major overland transportation artery dating to the time of the Palatine settlement. Between the Village of Montgomery and Newburgh to the east was situated the extensive land holdings of the Colden family, the centerpiece of which was the mansion house the first section of which was built for Cadwallader Colden, Jr. c. 1767. The region's early residents were largely engaged in agricultural pursuits, with wheat forming the crux of the agricultural economy, the farmers milling needs served by enterprises established on the Wallkill River and other water courses. By 1800 the village, named in honor of General Richard Montgomery, was witnessing increased development, a street grid having been laid out in the post-Revolutionary War period. Thus was the complexion of the Montgomery area as the 19<sup>th</sup> century unfolded, and against this backdrop Peale's 1801 expedition was undertaken.

Prior to Peale's 1801 expedition and subsequent reconstruction of two mastodon skeletons, unidentified prehistoric bones of this species had been found in New York State and other parts of the country. Nearly a century prior to the Peale expedition, around 1705, mastodon remains—first a tooth and, subsequently, a small number of bones—were found in the Claverack region southeast of Albany, an episode chronicled in a letter from Governor Joseph Dudley to the Reverend Cotton Mather the following July. At that time it was believed by some that the bones were those of an antediluvian race of men, "very large and of prodigious stature;"<sup>5</sup> these references were probably in large measure derived from the legends of Native Americans,

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*of Virginia.* Between 1796 and 1806, the French paleontologist Georges Cuvier, with the help of correspondents that included the Peales, delivered papers at the French National Institute and published articles that led to the final identification of the incognitum. Cuvier ultimately named the American mammoth the *mastodonte* in 1806.

<sup>5</sup> Rembrandt Peale, *Account of the Skeleton of The Mammoth* (London: H. Lawrence, 1802), 6.

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passed down generationally by oral tradition. Around 1740, significant quantities of mastodon remains were unearthed on the Ohio River near Big Bone Lick, Kentucky, some of which were hastily recovered and brought to France where they were described as the "Animal of the Ohio."<sup>6</sup> So far as the Montgomery area was concerned, the first recorded discovery of remains appears to be that made by the Reverend Robert Annan, in 1780, a few miles south of the village.<sup>7</sup> Annan's discovery became widely known in the region, drawing the attention of Washington and other Continental officers who traveled to Annan's farm to view the remains, and yet later Dr. Christian Michaelis, who had served as Surgeon General of the Hessian Army. Annan subsequently published an account of the discovery and a description of the bones, entitled "Account of a Large Animal Found near Hudson's River by the Rev. Mr. Robert Annan."<sup>8</sup> In 1794, about five miles west of the village, more mastodon remains were found near the dwelling of Archibald Crawford, and in 1800 bones were again discovered about seven miles northeast of the hamlet, on or near the farm of George Graham. While the Peale expedition of 1801 formed the watershed event so far as the exhumation of mastodon remains in Orange County, discoveries continued to be made in the region, among them those chronicled by Eager as having occurred in 1838, 1844 and 1845.<sup>9</sup>

News of the various discoveries of unidentified skeletal remains being made in and around the region was disseminated in a variety of ways. Locally, word spread rapidly of the large bones that farmers were unearthing from their marl pits, which were excavated for the rich black marl utilized as fertilizer. Sylvanus Miller, a New York City attorney, recalled seeing a collection of such bones as a school child near Montgomery around 1794, apparently the remains unearthed by Peter Millspaw on a farm he worked as a tenant west of the village.<sup>10</sup> During the excavations at John Masten's farm near Newburgh in 1799, scores of local citizens came to watch the rudimentary excavations, many joining in to assist the effort—though by one account the generous use of alcoholic spirits by some of the volunteers contributed to the damaging of some of the bones.<sup>11</sup> Masten later laid these bones out in his garret, apparently at times charging a modest sum for their viewing, and it was here that Charles Willson Peale first saw them, and later purchased them along with rights to dig in the earlier excavation from where they were recovered.<sup>12</sup>

The Montgomery-area discoveries were likewise being made known in distant intellectual circles, as local citizens shared news and evidence of the mastodon remains with distant associates. Some of the bones unearthed on Millspaw's property in 1794 were shipped by Dr. James G. Graham, a physician residing in the Shawangunk area, to Dr. Richard Bayley, a professor of anatomy at Columbia College in New York City, where they were included in that school's anatomical museum. Graham likewise chronicled and documented other local discoveries of mastodon remains, and would soon serve as an important contact for Peale as plans for his expedition unfolded.<sup>13</sup> In September 1800 Dr. Graham wrote to Dr. Samuel L. Mitchill, likewise at Columbia College, a prominent member of New York City's scientific community and editor of the nation's first scientific journal, *Medical Repository*. His letter to Mitchill outlined the recent series of discoveries, including the nearly intact skeleton that had been unearthed on Masten's farm. Shortly thereafter Sylvanus

<sup>6</sup> Samuel W. Eager, *An Outline History of Orange County* (Newburgh: S. T. Callahan, 1846-7), 73.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Annan's account was published in Boston in the *Memoirs of the American Academy of the Arts & Sciences*, vol. 2, 1795.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Paul Semonin, *American Monster* (New-York University Press, 2000), 315.

<sup>11</sup> R. Peale, *Mammoth*, 17.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>13</sup> Semonin, *Monster*, 316.

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Miller, who had returned to the area to view some of the recent finds, likewise wrote to Mitchill to inform him of recent developments, noting that the size of the bones unearthed from Masten's marl pit, and their remarkable condition, "afford a spectacle truly astonishing."<sup>14</sup>

Mitchill published Graham's and Miller's letters in the October 1800 issue of *Medical Repository*, while Dr. Elias Winfield published an article on the recent mastodon finds in the Newburgh-based paper *Rights of Man*. As noted by *American Monster* author Paul Semonin, these publications assisted in bringing the region's mastodon discoveries to a national audience—which included soon-to-be President Thomas Jefferson, who subsequently appealed to Chancellor Livingston in assisting him with procuring some of the remains unearthed near Shawangunk.<sup>15</sup> A few weeks subsequent Livingston informed Jefferson that he had failed in his attempts to secure any of the bones, noting that these were considered a sort of "common property" among the local citizenry, and likewise noted that the prospects for further discovery of enough bones to form an entire skeleton seemed good.<sup>16</sup>

A month after it was written Livingston's letter to Jefferson was read to the American Philosophical Society, though by that time Charles Willson Peale, who would play the central role in the upcoming expedition, was already well aware of the events unfolding in the mid-Hudson Valley. The Orange County bones had come to his attention via Winfield's account as published in the *Rights of Man*, forwarded to Peale by his wife's family in New York City, and likewise the articles published in Mitchill's *Medical Repository*.<sup>17</sup> In 1799, the American Philosophical Society had issued a circular stating its most important goals, which were four in number. The first goal was to procure an entire skeleton of the "Mammoth, so called, and such other unknown animals as either have been, or hereafter may be discovered in America." However, even prior to 1799, this goal was iterated by the group, and already a "Bone" and "Antiquities" Committee had been established, with Jefferson donating mammoth bones from Big Bone Lick and Greenbriar County, Virginia, to the Society's collections.<sup>18</sup> Peale, a native of Maryland born in 1741, first gained note as a portrait painter, having gained instruction under the tutelage of John Singleton Copley and later Benjamin West in London, England. During the American Revolution Peale served in the Pennsylvania militia, and later was a member of the Pennsylvania State Assembly, 1779-80, continuing his portraiture work during this period. Among his best known works as a portrait artist was his canvas of George Washington at Princeton, New Jersey, 1779. The artist also had a strong scientific bent that led him to explore the natural world, leading to the formation of the Philadelphia Museum, later known as Peale's Museum, which housed a broad array of "curiosities," among them archaeological and animal specimens in addition to his portraits of distinguished Americans. This museum, founded in the 1780s, was located adjacent to Independence Hall; his well-known self portrait of 1822 depicts

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 317-18.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.; Caspar Wistar alerted Jefferson to the Shawangunk discovery, and encouraged him to ask Chancellor Livingston for help, as the latter lived in the region. Wistar envisioned the mammoth bones' recovery as political propaganda to exploit for Jefferson's presidential race, as he was widely known in popular culture and slogans as the future "mammoth" president; moreover the nationalist aspects and positive publicity, Wistar believed, would help bring undecided New York voters into the Jeffersonian fold. See Wistar to Jefferson, 19 October 1800; Wistar to Jefferson, 8 December 1800; Jefferson to Wistar, Jefferson to Robert R. Livingston, 14 December 1800; Jefferson to Wistar, 16 December 1800; Livingston to Jefferson, 7 January 1801; Jefferson to Wistar, 3 February 1801, in Oberg et al, eds., *Papers of Thomas Jefferson* 32 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 230-33, 288-90, 302-04, 312, 406-09, 544-45.

<sup>16</sup>Livingston to Jefferson, 7 January 1801 in Oberg et al, *Jefferson Papers* 32; Wistar to Jefferson, 18 February 1801, in Oberg et al, eds., *Papers of Thomas Jefferson* 33 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 19-20.

<sup>17</sup>The clipping from *Rights of Man* was dated 6 October 1800, and a copy has recently been located by Katherine Woltz. See C.W. Peale *Diary* no. 19, Miller et al, *Peale Papers*, 354-55; Semonin, *Monster*, 321.

<sup>18</sup>Circular with goals printed in *Transactions of the APS* 4 (1799), xxxvii-xxxix.

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him in the museum, pulling aside a curtain to view the various curiosities housed within, a mastodon skeleton prominent among these. The painting is maintained by the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.

Wishing more specific information on the topic, Peale decided to make the journey to the Montgomery area, leaving Philadelphia for New York City in the spring of 1801. In New York Peale attained a letter of introduction to Dr. James Graham from Dr. Mitchell, and likewise guarantees of critical financial backing from family to maintain his efforts.<sup>19</sup> According to Peale's son, Rembrandt Peale, who joined his father on the later 1801 expedition, his father met up with Dr. Graham after his arrival in Newburgh via the Hudson River, and the morning after his arrival traveled to John Masten's farm to view the remains and excavation site, a flooded marl pit.<sup>20</sup> Soon thereafter Masten's son inquired as to whether Peale wished to purchase the bones from his father. The following day Peale and Masten agreed to the following transaction: \$200, a shotgun for Masten's son and gowns from New York City for his daughters in exchange for the existing set of bones, and an additional \$100 to conduct further excavations on site. The bones were hurriedly packed and shipped via the Hudson River the following morning.<sup>21</sup> Endeavoring to return in the summer, Peale traveled via river back to New York City, and while there exhibited some of the bones, which were viewed by, among others, Vice President Aaron Burr. From there Peale likewise wrote to President Jefferson, outlining his plans to return to the Masten farm for further investigation and likewise noting his acquisition. He described the upcoming task as "Herculean," given the significant depth of the Masten pits and their flooded condition.<sup>22</sup>

Upon his return to Philadelphia, Peale and others began the process of rearticulating the remains, in order to determine what bones they were missing, information that would guide his efforts when he returned to the Hudson Valley later that year. News of the mammoth continued to spread, and even before his return to the Montgomery area that summer, *Kline's Carlisle Weekly Gazette* proclaimed that Peale would soon be able to construct a complete skeleton—a proclamation that undoubtedly added further pressure on Peale's upcoming expedition. On July 17 Peale exhibited his drawings of the mastodon at a meeting of the American Philosophical Society, at which time he requested a loan of \$500 to support his upcoming field work. After appealing to President Jefferson for several large tents and a pump to further his work at the Masten farm, Peale left for the Hudson Valley with his son Rembrandt, museum assistant Jotham Fenton, and Dr. James Woodhouse, a chemistry professor at the University of Pennsylvania.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>So far as financial backing from his family was concerned, the original source is C.W. Peale's diary, where he gratefully speaks of John De Peyster's loan to him of between \$200 and \$300 to procure the rights to the bones possessed by Masten; see Diary no. 18, Miller et al, *Peale Papers*, 332; see also Charles Coleman Sellers, *Charles Willson Peale* (New York, 1969), 294-95; C.W. Peale to Dr. James G. Graham, 30 June 1801, for the particulars of the monetary exchange with John Masten, letter in *ibid.*, Miller et al, *Peale Papers*, vol. 2, pt. 1, 339-40; and also C.W. Peale's expense sheet, in which he records that Captain Barber and his wife loaned him a total of \$39.50 which he promptly repaid, in Lillian Miller et al, eds. *Microfiche* edition of the Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale, Series II-A, Card 24, C-7-10 and also C.W. Peale to John Masten, 1 July 1801, in Miller et al, *Microfiche*, Series II-A, Card 24, D-11.

<sup>20</sup>R. Peale, *Mammoth*, 14.

<sup>21</sup>C.W. Peale *Diary* no. 18, Miller et al, *Peale Papers*, 330-33.

<sup>22</sup>C.W. Peale to Jefferson, 29 June 1801, in Miller et al, *Peale Papers*, 338.

<sup>23</sup>In addition to appealing to Jefferson, C.W. Peale wrote to Andrew Ellicott, Secretary to the Land Office of Pennsylvania, for assistance with providing a "horse-mans & a common tent," so that he could live at the site whilst constructing a "Curb" around the mammoth pit. See Peale to Ellicott, 12 July 1801, in Miller et al, *Peale Papers*, 342-45. Details on the first exploratory trip are provided in Peale's *Diary* no. 18, in Miller et al, *Peale Papers*.

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*The Peale Expedition, August-September 1801*

Charles Willson Peale's 1801 summer expedition in Orange County focused on three locations: the marl pit at the Masten farm near Newburgh, which he had visited a few months prior; the Barber farm site on the Newburgh turnpike east of the Village of Montgomery, the subject of this nomination; and an extensive wooded bog near the tenant farm house of Peter Millspaw, a few miles west of Montgomery. These excavations, undertaken by Peale and his team, were subsequently celebrated by C.W. Peale in his oil painting *Excavation of the Mastodon*, 1806-08, which depicted the elaborate drainage apparatus conceived to deal with the flooded marl pit at the Masten site—along with other imagery that indicates this to be a composite view, and not merely a documentary view of the Masten site.<sup>24</sup> Central to the work at the Masten site and the painting is the elaborate drainage system erected there, consisting of a man-powered wheel that drove a tall chain of buckets suspended from a tripod-like construct with block and tackle, the buckets emptying into a drainage trough; the system, described as a “crab,” was devised for Peale by a local millwright.<sup>25</sup> The Barber site was probably the easiest of the three sites so far as logistics was concerned, as the elevated marl pit was more easily drained by a trench—its alignment still visible in the landscape—that conveyed water to a nearby and lower marsh area. As for the Millspaw site, a third method of exploration was required, as the search was conducted over a much larger area using long iron rods to probe several feet beneath the surface of the morass, along with an improvised windlass invention and the nautical pump. It probably bears noting that Peale's trip northward from New York City up the Hudson or “North” River to Newburgh was made on the rather aptly named sloop *The President Jefferson*.

Peale first focused on the Masten site, which had yielded the large collection of bones he purchased from John Masten a few months earlier. The site presented considerable challenges, given the uncharacteristic depth of pit, which was likewise filled with 12 feet of water upon the expedition's arrival. After constructing the “crab,” which only heightened the curiosity of the many people who came to watch the unusual work of Peale's team first-hand, a dozen laborers descended into the pit to begin the process of shoveling marl. As

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<sup>24</sup>Katherine Woltz's research proved critical in identifying Peale's painting as being a composite view: “Peale's painting depicts all three sites and likely references the Colden and Annan sites, as well. Beneath the wheel Peale depicts a shiny mammoth grinder which audiences— national and international—would have recognized from early publications by the Royal Society and the National Institute and its royal forerunner. Scientists in France, England, Germany, and Spain were among those seeking the first complete skeleton; Peale shows this shiny tooth for that reason, as it is an icon that all could recognize. The grinders actually found at the sites were “flint black” as per the description in his diary, not bright white as the painting shows. On Peale showing the three major sites, he does so by showing a broad sampling of the bones found at each site, and also depicts those given as gifts to him. For example, the tibia shown in the painting was a gift from Dr. Graham (see *Diary*, 368), and the femur was the one from Masten's barn (these are shown in composite form in the banner he holds in the painting). Peale also depicts this as a conflation of all three sites via his inventions—the wheel was used at the Masten farm, the windlass device was used at the Millspaw site, while the “ditch,” seen in the far right-hand lower corner with a bridge over it, is from the Barber site. The pump, meanwhile, was used at all 3 sites; it is located between the wheel and the windlass machine. Peale utilized a nautical pump and the one shown corresponds to late 18<sup>th</sup> century nautical pumps, which were encased typically in elm wood, as such making it look like a tree. The bottom of the pump ends in the little box in the pit. Peale described the Barber site as having a seven-foot fall, and from that point he decided to dig a deeper trench. By the time they were finished, the morass was 40 feet long long, 36 feet wide, and 12 feet deep—as such, it resembled the Masten farm morass. Peale discusses this in his diary, *Peale Papers* vol. 2, pt. 1 (1988); see 361-63 on the Barber site. Despite having enough bones to reconstruct two skeletons, the prized head of the mammoth remained elusive, and the hunt for such would not be realized for several more years, during which time many letters on the subject were exchanged between Jefferson and Peale, beginning immediately after Peale's return from New York in the summer of 1801 (See, for example, C.W. Peale to Jefferson, 11 October 1801; C.W. Peale to Jefferson, 12 January 1802; Jefferson to C.W. Peale, 16 January 1802; C.W. Peale to Jefferson, 21 January 1802, in *Peale Papers* vol. 2, pt. 1 (371-6; 386-90). Ultimately, William Clark located 2 complete mammoth heads, along with other bones, in 1807, which were sent to Jefferson, who kept one head for his “Indian Hall” at Monticello, while sending the other to Peale, curator of the American Philosophical Society's collections.

<sup>25</sup>See C.W. Peale *Diary* no. 19, in Miller et al, *Peale Papers*.

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historian Paul Semonin noted in *American Monster*, the scores of onlookers made for quite the scene, the excavations in his words “taking on a festive air with the watered-down liquor that Peale doled out and the squealing children who amused themselves by walking inside the mill wheel.”<sup>26</sup> The site was abandoned, however, after a few weeks of considerable effort, as the walls of the pit eventually fell in; a small collection of bones had been retrieved, however none of the most important and targeted bones, particularly a lower jaw bone and a number of missing vertebrae. As Rembrandt Peale himself later noted, “The patience of employer and workmen was at length exhausted, and the work relinquished without obtaining those interesting parts without which it was impossible to form a skeleton.”<sup>27</sup>

Peale, acting on the advice of Dr. Gallatin, a Montgomery resident whom he had met through Dr. Graham, now turned his attention to the Barber farm site just east of Montgomery on the turnpike. The equipment was packed and conveyed via wagon, and permission to explore the site had been granted to him by Captain Barber.<sup>28</sup> As noted the site—a small marl bog—presented far less challenges, as it was very easily drained through the construction of a trench and the use of the nautical pump, unlike the Masten site which was fraught with complexities. Laborers removed the marl, careful not to damage any bones, and set it aside for Barber’s subsequent use. Barber gave Peale two ribs he had found previously, and the site yielded a small collection of bones, including two rotten tusks, a few small grinders, toes bones and vertebrae, a broken scapula, and an almost entire set of ribs.<sup>29</sup> The nearly intact set of ribs would later prove important to the Peale’s as they worked to assemble a complete skeleton.<sup>30</sup> Peale himself noted the following:

The Pit we had now made was 40 feet long & 36feet wide and 12 feet below the level of the morass, with such an extent I thought it hopeless to expect to find any of the other relics [sic] of this Animal by digging farther around. Therefore I quit the search & [paid] off my laborers, who went away perfectly satisfied.<sup>31</sup>

Among those who had taken an avid interest in Peale’s work at the Barber farm was Samuel W. Eager, at that time but a young school-aged boy, who would later gain note as one of Orange County’s preeminent 19<sup>th</sup> century historians. Eager lived with his family just outside Montgomery, residents of which were keeping close account of Peale’s efforts, which were being shifted from the Masten to the nearby Barber site. Eager, his young curiosities presumably much aroused, came to the site to observe the progress of work from “day to day.”<sup>32</sup> Eager would go on to earn a law degree, practicing at Felter’s Tavern in Montgomery, and later wrote *An Outline History of Orange County*, the first comprehensive account of Orange County’s history and to this day a much-referenced historical source.

In early September Peale considered a new site to focus his attention on, in order to find the missing bones that had been eluding his team—those necessary to form a complete skeleton. Captain Barber accompanied Peale to the farm where Reverend Annan had made his discoveries some two decades prior, and to the farm of Alexander Colden; however the team, at the urging of Dr. Gallatin, finally selected the tenant farm of Peter

<sup>26</sup>Semonin, *Monster*, 324.

<sup>27</sup>R. Peale, *Mammoth*, 19.

<sup>28</sup>C.W. Peale *Diary* no. 19, in Miller et al, *Peale Papers*, 361.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 361-63.

<sup>30</sup>R. Peale, *Mammoth*, 25.

<sup>31</sup>C.W. Peale diary entry as quoted in Semonin, *Mammoth*, 325.

<sup>32</sup>Eager, *Orange County*, 73.

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Millspaw, where significant bone deposits were discovered a decade earlier.<sup>33</sup> This site presented a new challenge, as it was far more extensive than the two previously excavated. Peale and his crew used long iron rods with wooden cross handles to probe beneath the surface; when the rod struck something that appeared to be bone, a twelve-foot deep excavation was made, forty feet square, the pumping equipment installed though with a windlass in place of the wheel.<sup>34</sup>

The following account of the work at the Millspaw site was offered by Rembrandt Peale:

Our next place of search. . . was a most dismal morass; the most awful silence reigned throughout it, and not the smallest breath of air was felt; every step was taken on rotten timber and the spreading roots of tall trees, the luxuriant growth of a few years, half of which were tottering over our heads. . .

Here alternate success and disappointment amused and fatigued us for a long while; until our pockets emptied, our spirits low, our workmen languid, we were about to quit the morass with but a small collection, though in good preservation. . . In the meanwhile the ground was searched in various directions with long-pointed rods and cross handles. . . and by this means, in a very unexpected direction, struck upon a large collection of bones, which were dug to and taken up with every possible care. They proved to be a humerus [sic], or large bone of the right leg with the radius and ulna of the left, the right scapula, the atlas, and, the great object of our pursuit, a complete under jaw!

After such a variety of labour and length of fruitless expectation, this success was extremely grateful to all parties, and the woods echoed with repeated huzzas. "Gracious God, what a jaw! How many animals must have been crushed between it!" was the exclamation of all; a fresh supply of grog went round, and the hearty fellows, covered with mud, continued the search.<sup>35</sup>

In mid-September, with the long-sought after jaw bone having been recovered in the Millspaw morass, and shortly thereafter fragments of a skull, Peale concluded his Orange County expedition. The bones collected from the Masten, Barber and Millspaw sites, along with those otherwise procured from Dr. Graham and others, were carefully packed in wood containers for shipment via boat to New York City and from there to Philadelphia. In New York Peale exhibited a few bones at the house of his host, Major Stagg, where many came to see them. "Their magnitude," Peale wrote, "surprised many and only served to excite their curiosity to see the intire [sic] Skeleton."<sup>36</sup> Following his return to Philadelphia, three months were spent reconstructing the remains. Using the bones from the three sites, Rembrandt Peale carved wood duplicates of missing bones in order that two nearly complete skeletons could eventually be formed. On Christmas Eve, 1801, the first of these skeletons was displayed at Peale's museum in Philadelphia, while the following year Rembrandt and Rubens Peale exhibited the second skeleton in London.

*National Context: The Orange County Mastodon Discoveries & Their Place in Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century America*

The American mastodon, known prior to 1809 in the United States as the mammoth or *incognitum*, was the subject of significant national and international dialogue in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, particularly as it related to French naturalist George Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon's theory of American Degeneracy, which Thomas Jefferson sought to counter in his *Notes on the State of Virginia* and subsequently. Knowledge of

<sup>33</sup>C.W. Peale, *Diary 19*, in Miller et al, *Peale Papers*, 363.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 363-68.

<sup>35</sup>R. Peale, *Mammoth*, 21-22.

<sup>36</sup>C.W. Peale, *Diary 19*, in Miller et al, *Peale Papers*, 369.

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the mastodon was not confined solely within intellectual and scientific circles, however, as the prehistoric mammal captured the American public's attention; the skeleton displayed in Peale's Philadelphia museum was among the preeminent curiosities of its day, and much admired by visitors. Unusual evidence of the broad appeal of the mastodon and its effect on the American imagination—and likewise its strong connection to Jefferson—is illustrated by the “Cheshire Mammoth Cheese,” which was delivered to the president at the White House on New Year's Day 1802. Approximately four feet in diameter, 18 inches tall and weighing 1,200 pounds, it had been made by the “Ladies of Cheshire” in Cheshire, Massachusetts, as a sign of that community's affection for the president and his policies in relation to religious freedom.<sup>37</sup> This unusual gift signaled the broad knowledge the American public maintained of this prehistoric mammal—largely creditable to the results achieved by Peale's 1801 expedition—Jefferson's interest in the mastodon as related to his efforts to debunk Buffon's theory, and likewise the latter's efforts as an amateur naturalist. The Cheshire cheese did not go unnoticed by Jefferson's political adversaries, however, some of whom seized on this strange gift to mount attacks against him. Notable, too, was the celebratory and well-publicized dinner hosted by Rembrandt Peale, the so-called “mammoth feast,” as a kick-off to the upcoming European tour. An assembly of 13 prominent men associated with the project dined at a banquet table beneath the skeletal rib cage of one of the rearticulated mammoths, giving toasts to its successful exhumation and reconstruction, and likewise to Jefferson and the nation. After each toast, bars from patriotic tunes such as “Jefferson's March” and “Yankee Doodle” were played for guests on the piano.<sup>38</sup> The discovery and successful interpretation of the mastodon remains unearthed and otherwise collected by Peale and his team in Orange County in 1801 proved exceptionally important in scientific quarters, particularly as they helped establish that some animals had become extinct during the course of history, a notion considered heretical to many in the 18<sup>th</sup> century United States.

In his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, begun in 1781,<sup>39</sup> Jefferson introduced the mammoth remains from Big Bone Lick, Kentucky, as a means of disputing Comte de Buffon's theory, which held that animals, once introduced to North America, would decrease in size and vigor over subsequent generations due to environmental factors. Aside from being a scientific theory, albeit a flawed one, Buffon's work likewise had the effect of undermining the legitimacy and vitality of the new nation on the international stage, by suggesting the superiority of the European environment over that of the New World. Others, such as Abbe Raynal, extended Buffon's work—which included not only animals but also Native Americans, which he viewed as “small and feeble” with “no vivacity, no activity of mind”—to include white European settlers. Raynal went so far as to suggest that the New World, lacking the favorable environmental factors that the European continent enjoyed, would likely never produce anyone of genius. Jefferson, seeking to undermine this theory at its source, Buffon's work, utilized the mammoth as a central aspect of his rebuttal.<sup>40</sup> While writing in the early 1780s accurate information on the animal was still limited; Peale's 1801 expedition, which Jefferson took an avid interest in and lent Federal support to, helped formalize information on this prehistoric mammal by providing the first essentially complete and rearticulated skeletons. Rembrandt Peale's 1803 *An Historical*

<sup>37</sup>L.H. Butterfield, “The Elder John Leland, Jefferson Itinerant,” *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, 62 (1953), 216-19.

<sup>38</sup>Semonin, *Monster*, 330.

<sup>39</sup>*Notes on the State of Virginia* was begun in 1781 and brought to print for a private edition issued and distributed to Jefferson's friends and associates in Paris in 1785. Unauthorized French translation of the 1785 text published in 1786 by André Morellet as “*Observations sur la Virginie*.” The first “official” edition was published in 1787.

<sup>40</sup>Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, (8<sup>th</sup> Edition, Boston, 1801), 59-101.

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*Disquisition on the Mammoth*,<sup>41</sup> a revised and expanded version of the 1802 exhibition pamphlet *Account of the Skeleton of the Mammoth*, directly attributes a statement to Jefferson that the results of the Peale's Orange County expedition directly refuted Buffon's theory. As such it would appear the work undertaken at the Masten, Barber and Millspaw sites was in fact instrumental in its contribution to the anti-Buffon argument first mounted by Jefferson in the 1780s. Jefferson's interest in the subject remained unceasing even following the watershed 1801 Peale expedition, as in 1804 he issued a directive to explorers Lewis and Clark to find evidence of the mammoth, and likewise in 1807, when he personally financed a Clark-led expedition to Big Bone Lick to investigate further discoveries of bones then being made at that location, the first of which were found in 1739 by Charles LeMoynes, 2<sup>nd</sup> Baron of Longueuil, who brought them to France in 1740 for study.

Paul Semonin, author of *American Monster*, offered the following analysis of the cultural importance of the mastodon discoveries of which the Orange County work by the Peales was central, suggesting that they, much like work of the Hudson River School painters of the following generation, helped lend definition to the collective national identity in lieu of other historical reference points:

The significance of the mastodon story, however, lies not only in what it tells us about the myths permeating the Founding Fathers views of the natural world but also in how it illuminates our own assumptions about prehistoric nature. . . In addition to throwing new light on the scientific story, my account of the mastodon's discovery reveals much about the early development of American national consciousness and its relationship to the ideas about the earth's natural history. In effect, with the rejection of America's native civilizations, the gigantic bones became symbols of a new nation's natural antiquity, the equivalent, in the eyes of the Founding Fathers, of the Greek and Roman ruins."<sup>42</sup>

In addition to their cultural relevance, the ability of the Peales to form a complete mastodon skeleton from the Orange County remains was critical to the contemporary international scientific community. Prior to the articulation of a complete mastodon skeleton, made possible only after the 1801 expedition, there was little consensus so far as the nature of this animal was concerned; the two Peale-assembled skeletons allowed for a more thorough interpretation of the mastodon's movement, weight, potential range, and other important considerations. Some in Europe, such as Buffon, had previously claimed the American mammoth to simply be a relative of the elephant, an argument that continued to be forwarded by critics of the London exhibition. Yet more importantly, the articulation of a complete skeleton and with it the ability for a more precise interpretation provided the critical information necessary for naturalists like Georges Cuvier (1796-1832), once and for all, to prove definitively that some animals had become extinct over the course of history—a theory considered heretical to some, as it ran counter to existing views of the world as seen through the lens of contemporary religion. Reverend Robert Annan, who had discovered some of the first mastodon remains in the Montgomery area, had himself struggled with the notion of extinction and portrayed such in his *Account of* 1785. The information offered by the skeletons assembled by the Peales proved central to this debate, as interpreted by Cuvier—considered one of the founders of the science of paleontology—who in 1796 had forwarded the thesis that the “Animal of the Ohio,” the mammoth remains that had been forwarded to France from America by LeMoynes in 1740, was in fact a distinct species from the elephant and the Siberian mammoth, and had become extinct. In 1806 Cuvier, aided by drawings rendered by C.W. Peale for Dr. Michaelis, and information disseminated by Rembrandt Peale in 1802 and 1803, formally declared the

<sup>41</sup>Rembrandt Peale, *Disquisition on the Mammoth, or, Great American Incognitum, an extinct, Immense, Carnivorous Animal whose Fossils Remains have been found in North America* (London, 1803).

<sup>42</sup>Semonin, *Monster*, 4.

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American mammoth an extinct species, and distinct from those animals others had tried to relate it to. Proponents of the theory of extinction finally had the evidence they required, provided for, in large measure, by the work of Charles W. and Rembrandt Peale.

In 1802 Rembrandt and his brother Rubens Peale initiated a European tour with the second mastodon skeleton, preceded by an exhibition in New York City that was well-received. The tour began with a London exhibition that, while somewhat successful among the city's more affluent citizens, was apparently prohibitively priced, and as such not as well attended as might have otherwise been the case.<sup>43</sup> As the Peales prepared to shift the exhibit to Paris, war was declared by England against France, forcing them to abandon their plan and return to America. In 1803 Rembrandt Peale offered his *Historical Disquisition on the Mammoth*, in which he forwarded a more thorough and accurate description of the mammal than had previously been rendered, in addition to dismissing some of Buffon's previous assumptions. As for his father Charles Willson Peale, between 1806 and 1808 he painted his well-known *Exhumation of the Mastodon*, which depicted the excavation work at the Masten Farm in 1801, and the remarkable water drainage system constructed to deal with the flooded marl pit. In his 1822 self-portrait, today maintained at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, C.W. Peale chose to depict himself within the museum that the mastodon had helped make famous. Prominently situated in the foreground of Peale's painting is the jaw and other bones of the mastodon, while over his right shoulder, partially behind the curtain, is a fully articulated skeleton; at his feet is a bird, the American wild turkey, which appears to bow in obeisance to Peale and his collection of curiosities. Both father and son, who are remembered as accomplished artists, were likewise among the foremost figures in the early paleontological community. As noted by the American Academy of Natural Sciences, Charles Wilson and Rembrandt Peale, along with Jefferson and Caspar Wistar, were "major players at the beginning of Paleontology in the United States," largely on account of their watershed 1801 Hudson Valley expedition to Orange County.

The Peale Barber Farm Mastodon Exhumation Site remains a rare and extraordinary historic resource, sharing as it does salient and profound connections with events of national—and international—scope, a central feature of a national dialogue sustained by the likes of Thomas Jefferson and Charles Willson Peale in the Early Republican period of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>43</sup>Prohibitive cost, while most often cited as reason why attendance of the event was poor, was not the only reason for such. The "project of the mammoth" was perceived by some as linked to Napoleon and invasion conspiracies, with some British labeling the reconstructed skeleton "Boney"—knowing as they did through London Royal Society member Joseph Banks' efforts on the Peales' behalf to promote the mastodon that the Peales intended to sell the skeleton to the First Consul for display at the Louvre. Another ploy this camp used was marginalizing Rembrandt Peale's lectures and pamphlets by noting he "had no formal training." As such, the mammoth was politicized. In addition, Rembrandt's 1800 portrait of Jefferson was conspicuously exhibited alongside the skeleton, leaving no room for doubt that the project of the mastodon was linked to the American Philosophical Society and the Jeffersonian-democrats—claimed to be supporters of Napoleon by American Federalists and their British political allies.

Property Name *Peale's Barber Farm Mastodon Exhumation Site*  
Location *Montgomery vicinity, Orange County, New York*

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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Property Name *Peale's Barber Farm Mastodon Exhumation Site*  
Location *Montgomery vic., Orange County, New York*

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**10. Geographical Data**

*Verbal Boundary Description*

The boundary for this National Register of Historic Places nomination is shown on the enclosed site map, derived from aerial photography and USGS quad mapping, and entitled "Peale's Barber Farm Mastodon Exhumation Site, Montgomery vicinity, Orange County, New York."

*Boundary Justification*

The boundary for the nomination has been drawn to correspond with the extent of the existing pond—the flooded marl pit—which is 2.06 acres in extent, with no additional land outside the pond being included. The drainage trench that proved a critical feature in identifying the site as that of the Peale excavation has not been included, given its recent alteration, even though it remains on the original alignment as laid out to facilitate drainage in association with the excavation work. Given the complexities of the site and the passage of over two hundred years since the time of Peale's excavation, the boundary has been drawn to include only the pond itself, which, along with the trench alignment, is the only readable physical feature of the 1801 summer excavation of the Barber farm site.

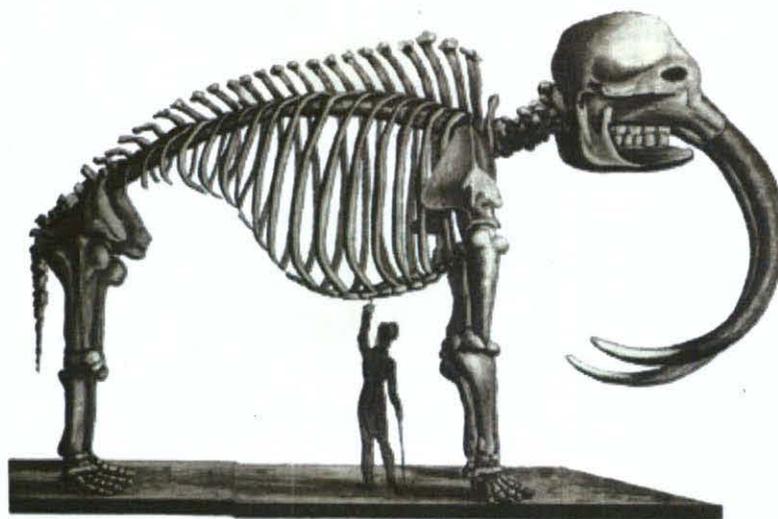
Property Name *Peale's Barber Farm Mastodon Exhumation Site*  
Location *Montgomery vicinity, Orange County, New York*

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Appendix



*C.W. Peale, Exhumation of the Mastodon, 1806-08; Baltimore Historical Society, Maryland*

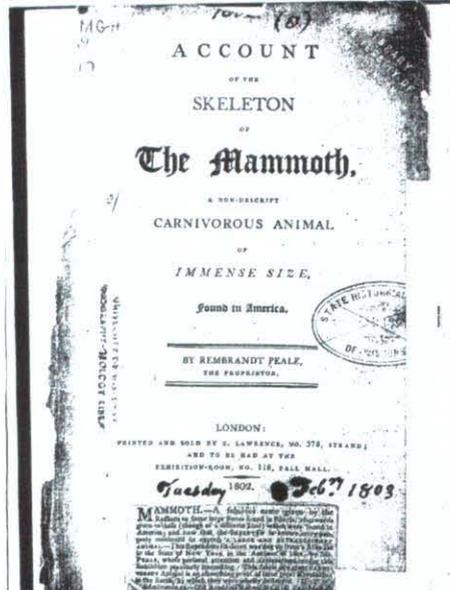


*Early Interpretation of the Mastodon Skeleton, with downward-facing tusks*

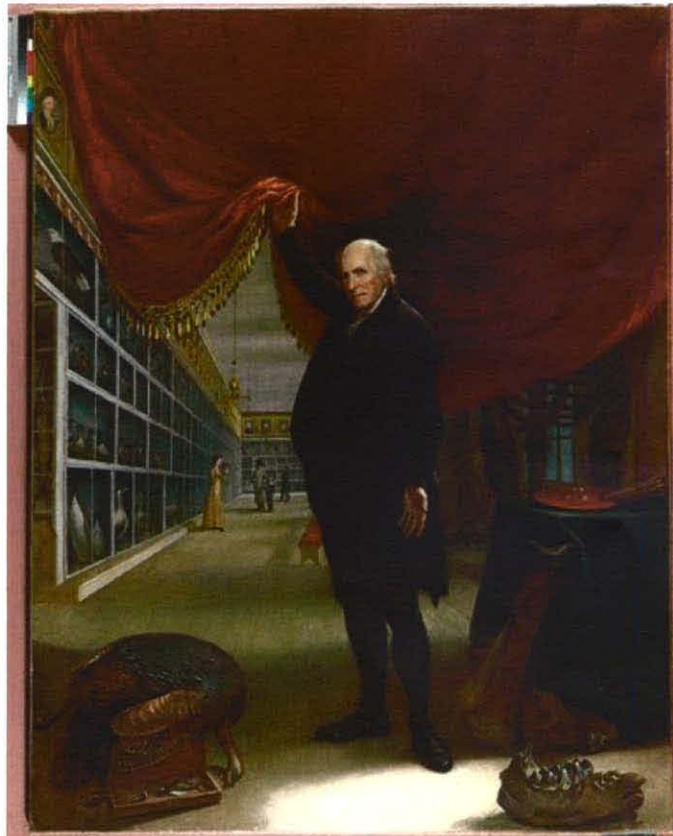
Property Name *Peale's Barber Farm Mastodon Excavation Site*  
Location *Montgomery vicinity, Orange County, New York*

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Appendix

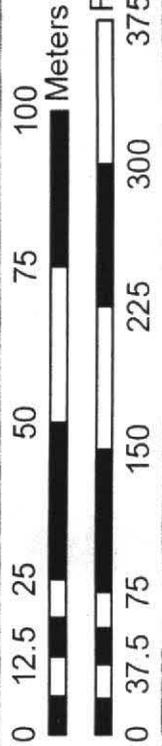
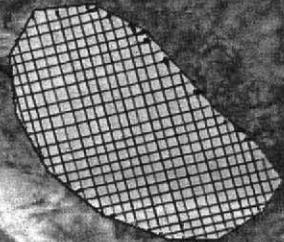


Cover Page from Rembrandt Peale's *The Mammoth* (London: 1832)



C.W. Peale, *The Artist in His Museum* (Self Portrait), 1822;  
Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Pennsylvania.

Peale's Barber Farm Mastodon Exhumation Site  
Route 17K, Montgomery vicinity, Orange County, New York  
Boundary indicated by cross-hatching



1:1,219

Property Name *Peale's Barber Farm Mastodon Exhumation Site*  
Location *Montgomery vic., Orange County, New York*

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**PHOTOGRAPHS**

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**Photograph Key**

Photographs by William E. Krattinger, April 2008

1. Pond, view looking roughly south
2. Pond, view looking roughly southeast



