

0. DINOSAUR FOSSILS - Story Preface

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In this montage, we see six different types of fossilized dinosaurs. Clockwise, from top left, they are: *Microraptor gui*; *Apatosaurus louisae*; *Edmontosaurus regalis*; *Triceratops horridus*; *Stegosaurus stenops*; and *Pinacosaurus grangeri*. Compilation by Dr Kiernan; online via Wikimedia Commons. [License: CC BY 2.0](#)

Pliny Moody was the first person to discover fossilized dinosaur tracks. It was 1802. Those tracks are known today as the Moody Footmark Quarry in South Hadley, Massachusetts.

At the time, people believed the bipedal footprints must have been made by a large bird. [Edward Hitchcock](#), one of the foremost early [authorities](#) on the subject, published a book about those and other tracks. (In the end, they turned out to be dinosaur tracks.)

Around 50 years later, also in America, Ferdinand [Hayden](#) conducted a geological survey along the Judith River (in what was then the Nebraska Territory). He found some large fossilized teeth belonging to unknown animals. He sent the fossils to Philadelphia where they could be studied by [Joseph Leidy](#), an [eminent](#) physician and naturalist.

After he completed his study of those teeth, and other unknown remains, Leidy published his findings. It was the [first](#) description of dinosaur remains printed in the United States.

Not long after Leidy published his paper, the study of dinosaurs became an important academic subject. But as rivalry developed between two of his colleagues (Edward [Cope](#) and Othniel C. Marsh), Leidy grew tired of the bickering.

Working from incomplete skeletons, scientists did not have all the answers about ancient animal remains. It was easy to make errors as one man tried to outdo the other with each new "discovery."

But the Cope-Marsh antagonism grew significantly after Cope made a huge mistake in reconstructing an [Elasmosaurus](#). He placed the creature's head on the wrong end of its body and then published his work.

When [Marsh](#) pointed out the flaw, [Cope](#) was mortified. He tried to buy back all the illustration plates so he could correct his error. (Cope wasn't totally successful in that endeavor, however, as [this link](#) to the Linda Hall Library in Kansas City, Missouri confirms.)

Rivalries between various groups of dinosaur students (professional and amateur) is not just a thing of the past. The battle over "Sue" (the Field Museum's *T. rex*) and who does (and doesn't) "know what" about dinosaur fossils are examples of more modern disagreements. Occasional feuding between dinosaur hunters is as much a part of the world today as it was during Leidy's time.

Moving beyond extinct species, like dinosaurs, what do we know of gorillas?

They are, among other things, endangered. Mothers are incredibly gentle, and loving, with their newborn (as movies in the next chapter depict). And they (especially the adult males) are huge. An [eastern lowland gorilla](#), standing on two legs, measures about 5½ feet and weighs between 300-400 pounds.

Let's visit a few gorillas in their natural habitat.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

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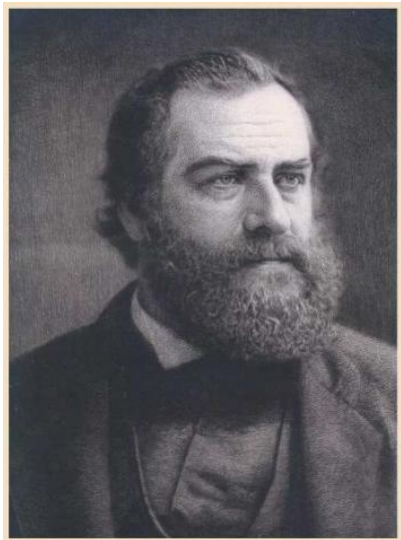


Dinosaur Montage - Fossilized Remains

Online via Wikimedia Commons; Image of dinosaur fossils compiled by Dr. Kiernan

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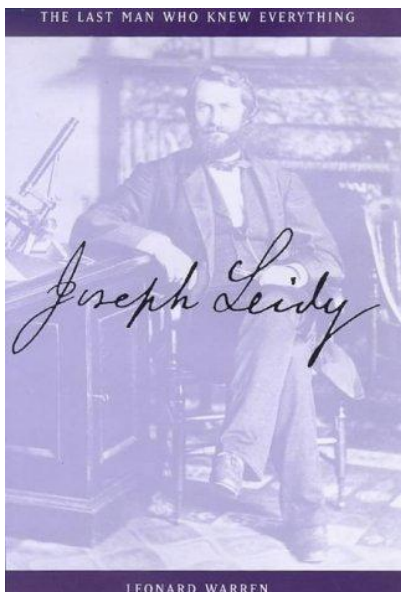
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Joseph Leidy

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Edward Cope

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