



# The Bone Hunters: The Discovery Of Miocene Fossils In Gray, Tennessee

*Harry Moore*

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In the spring and summer of 2000, geologists working for the Tennessee Department of Transportation made an extraordinary find as they examined soil at a routine road construction project: the digging at Gray, Tennessee, had uncovered a fossil site containing bones that would turn out to be at least five million years old. Harry Moore and his colleagues, along with researchers from the state and the University of Tennessee, were stunned as they unearthed the fossilized remains of tapirs, elephants, rhinoceroses, alligators, and other long-dead animals. What was at first thought to be an Ice Age site ten to twenty thousand years old proved to be much, much older.

The Bone Hunters recounts the fascinating details of a remarkable chance discovery. In his engaging firsthand account, Moore writes of the people behind the excavation of the site and how their efforts helped save valuable artifacts for ongoing study. Numerous photographs capture the excellent condition of fossils at Gray. Moore also describes the contours of what the ancient landscape may have looked like and details the governmental action that ultimately preserved this Tennessee treasure.

Harry Moore manages the Tennessee Department of Transportation's Geotechnical Engineering office in Knoxville. His previous books are *A Roadside Guide to the Geology of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park*, *A Geologic Trip Across Tennessee by Interstate 40*, and *Discovering October Roads: Fall Colors and Geology in Rural East Tennessee* (co-written with Fred Brown).



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