

# RECORD OF A CERVUS SP. ANTLER FROM LIVINGSTON COUNTY, ILLINOIS

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## ABSTRACT

In June of 1985, the basal portion of a Cervid antler was discovered partially buried in a sand/gravel bar of Rook's Creek, approximately 5 km northeast of Graymont in Livingston County, Illinois (Rook's Creek Township, Section 15, R4E, T28N). Size and shape of the fragment indicated it to be part of a *Cervus* sp. antler, rather than that of the presently-ubiquitous Illinois Cervid, *Odocoileus virginianus* (Figure 1).

The fragment is part of a shed right antler. Overall length is 256 mm with a burr diameter of 76 mm and a single bifurcation 125 mm above the base. The main beam is hollow and a large portion of the burr is absent; the overall degenerative state of the fragment suggests a subfossilized condition. There is no evidence of tooling to indicate its use as an aboriginal artifact.

Although a state-wide, prehistoric distribution of *Cervus* sp. has been suggested (Hoffmeister and Mohr, 1972), bona fide documentation in Illinois is limited and patchy. Purdue and Styles (1987) reported occurrences of *Cervus elaphus* during the Holocene from archaeological sites in Madison, Randolph, and St. Clair Counties. Sightings and/or tracks of *Cervus canadensis* were reported in the late 1700's through the early 1800's in Cook, Randolph, Peoria, and Wabash Counties

(Murie, 1951), and a set of *C. canadensis* antlers was reportedly discovered in Lake County (Cory, 1912), *C. canadensis* is generally thought to have been extirpated statewide by the mid-1800's (Hoffmeister and Mohr, 1972). The discovery of this antler fragment represents the first documented historical occurrence of *Cervus* sp. in Livingston County.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Figure 1. The antler fragment presently is in the possession of the author, J.D. Hildenbrand.