

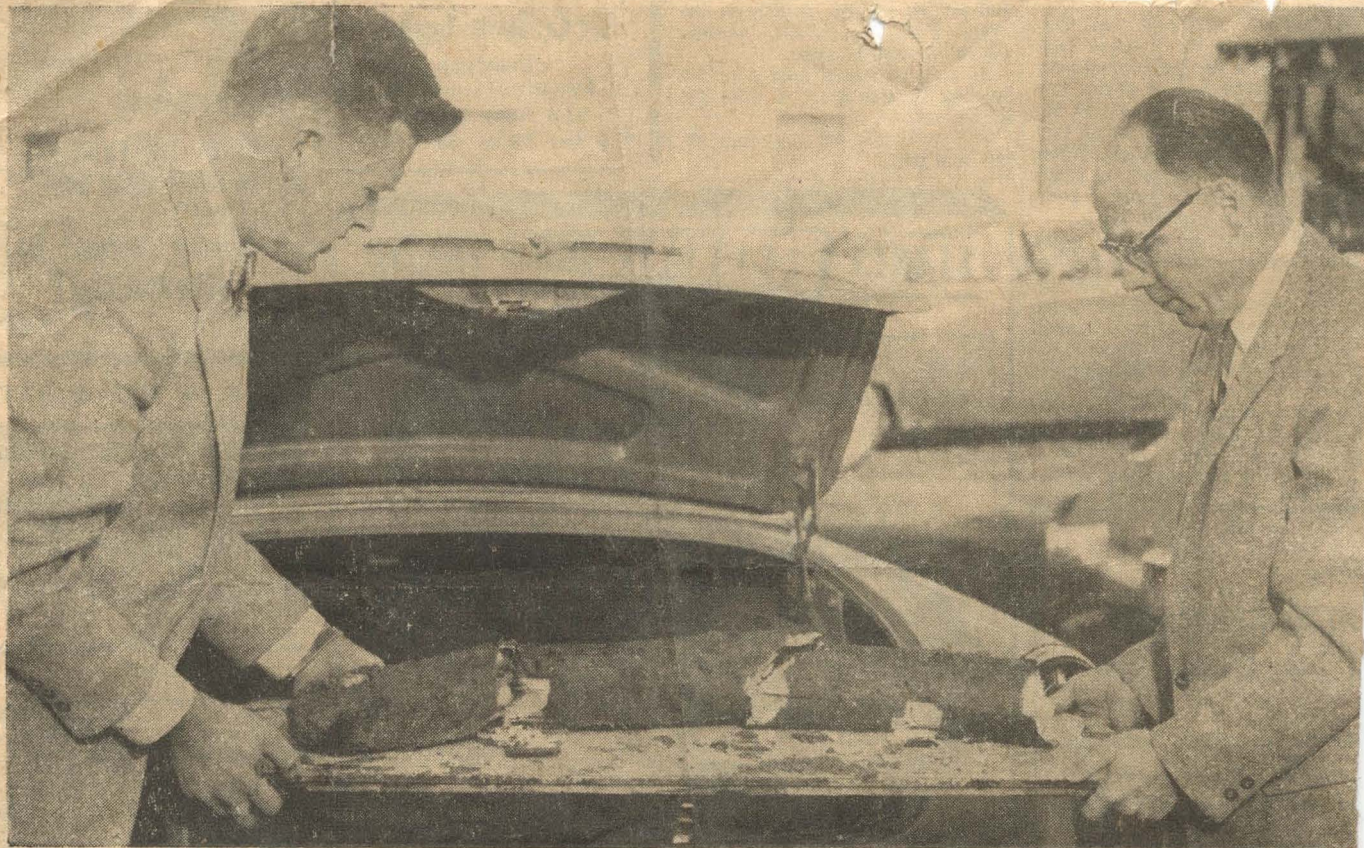
# Mastodon Tusk Found At Ashland

ASHLAND, Ore. (AP)—A three-foot-long chunk of bone, believed to be part of a mastodon which died 20 to 40 million years ago, was found Tuesday on the Southern Oregon College campus.

Grounds keeper Dick Jay came upon the find while digging a drainage ditch near the men's dormitory.

Science teachers said they think ~~sea and that the big elephant~~ that the school site is on the edge of what was once a huge inland sea and that the big elephant-like mammal probably had died after becoming caught in quicksand.

Science students started digging at the site after Jay found the bone. They uncovered what is believed to be a tooth. It measured 8 inches by 10 inches by 4 inches. The digging will continue.



ASHLAND — Science professors Dr. Frank Sturges (left) and Dr. Clarence Dieble of Southern Oregon College examine section of mastodon tusk

that was unearthed on the college campus Tuesday afternoon by college grounds keeper Dick Joy when he was digging to find a leak in a drainage tile.

The tusk, estimated to be about 20 million years old, was taken to the college science laboratory a few blocks away to be cleaned and examined more

UPI TELEPHOTO

closely. The campus is located on the edge of what was once a huge inland sea.



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# Buck Rock Tunnel Route Hides Traces

By MARJORIE O'HARRA  
Special Writer, The Oregonian

ASHLAND (Special) — We were headed for Buck Rock Tunnel, the almost legendary railroad tunnel of the Siskiyou.

The road was steep just a trace along the side of a forested ridge, but the Jeep crawled on and up with comforting sureness. Rancher Jim Bell's bay mare trudged along behind. Bell planned to go horseback from the end of the Jeep road, but as for the rest of us — we were hiking.

Buck Rock Tunnel, somewhere ahead and above of us, was to have been Tunnel No. 13 on the Oregon and California Railroad Company line as the company pushed south from Roseburg reaching Ashland on May 9, 1884.

Tracks had been laid south of Ashland for about a mile and the tunnel was started in the Siskiyou.

Then, in 1885, the company experienced financial difficulties and was sold to Central Pacific Railroad Company. More financial problems — and Southern Pacific Railroad Company came into possession of the holdings after Central went into receivership.

Southern Pacific engineer William Hood, the man who established his reputation with the construction of Tehachapi Pass, in California, was put in charge of building the Southern Pacific line north from California into Oregon.

In 1887 he announced the company would "push along to the Siskiyou Mountain tunnel route," abandoning the Oregon and California Railroad plan. The new tunnel would pierce Siskiyou summit just above Coles Station.

Bell stopped in a little clearing to show us where he had found a granite arrastra (crude drag stone mill used for crushing ore) that probably had been brought here by Chinese laborers hired for tunnel work.



GLOOMY MOUTH of abandoned Buck Rock Tunnel near Ashland looms before trio bent on exploring the famed tunnel. Old O&C Railroad Company started what would

have been Tunnel 13 before being sold to Central Pacific Railroad Co., which was later taken over by Southern Pacific. Tunnel was abandoned about 1885.

We had come to the end of the road. Our guide saddled up his mare — and we began the long trudge upward.

We stopped at what had been the site of the cookhouse for the Chinese laborers and Bell said we soon would reach the west entrance to the tunnel.

We puffed on.

Then we spotted the "dump," jagged, broken rocks taken out as the tunnel crews blasted through the solid center of the mountain ridge.

And finally, there was Buck Rock Tunnel, a big, black hole in the crease of the mountain; big enough to accommodate a railroad train.

The beam of a flashlight failed to pierce the darkness but a metal reflector shot the beams of the sun some 200 feet back into the mountain.

If Buck Rock Tunnel had been completed it would have been 1,650 feet long.

The tunnel was dry, sterile and terribly quiet inside, without animal sign except for a pack rat nest on the ledge where work was halted.

Several hundred Chinese had been employed here and we remembered the stories, undocumented, that told of a cave-in which claimed the lives of 40 or 50 of them.

The Chinese railroad builders worked with black powder

in those days before perfection of dynamite.

Leaving the site the climb really started — up over the ridge to find the east entrance to the tunnel.

Going down is almost as hard as going up, but we dropped over the ridge and because of Bell's sixth sense of direction in tall timber, we



# Of Troubled Days

found the gully that led to the second entrance with little trouble.

A dirt slide had almost obscured the opening, but perched on top, we could again look into inky blackness. This tunnel progressed some 300 feet back into the mountain. There was dampness and thick, heavy moss glistening with beads of moisture.

We started the return trip by circling the top of the mountain and coming to what Bell said had been the site of Hell Town, the Chinese laborers' camp. Poles which had formed walls were rotting on the ground and there was evidence of fire pits.

Back at the ranch, Bell handed me an envelope.

"This is the story of Buck Rock Tunnel," he said. "The result of a tremendous amount of research done by Mark Lawrence, who lives in Medford."

Several days later I called Lawrence, who said it was 13 years ago that he first heard of the "lost" tunnel. He tried to find it without success and more or less put it out of his mind.

Two years ago, however, he became interested again. Studying aerial photos he found what he assumed were the grades leading to both ends of the tunnel, then he talked with Bell (the tunnel is on a ridge on Bell's 400-acre ranch) and with a great deal of exploring through forests and thick underbrush, he and his sons found both tunnel entrances.

## Clue Uncovered

He wanted to know more, but there was no one to tell him the story. He read every history book he could find and found no mention of the tunnel until he read, "My Playhouse was a Concord Coach." Here he found a clue, enough to spur him on.

"I went to the museum in Jacksonville," Lawrence said, "and I read the microfilm of all the local newspapers print-

ed between 1880 and 1887. There were snatches of information here and there, notes and paragraphs in all parts of the papers, but from them pieced together the story.

"It tells," he said, "how John A. Hurlburt started examining routes through the Siskiyou in 1881 based on preliminary surveys made in 1861 and 1865 by Simon G. Elliot and Col. Charles Barry."

Lawrence's research showed that a period of 24 years elapsed between the preliminary surveys and final construction of the railroad line — years during which the Oregon and California Railroad passed into the hands of first the Central Pacific then the Southern Pacific.

## Fate Decided

After deciding on a new alignment, the Southern Pacific announced it would build a new Tunnel No. 13 (scene of the infamous DeAutremon train robbery in 1923) through the Siskiyou.

The first train passed through Siskiyou Tunnel No. 13 on Oct. 10, 1887 — and the fate of Buck Rock Tunnel was sealed.

Lawrence said there are those today who believe the steeper route chosen by the Southern Pacific was a source of trouble which was largely responsible for the railroad constructing another line by way of Klamath Falls in late years.

Buck Rock Tunnel was forgotten by most, its story remembered by only a few. The tunnel became an elusive legend.

Lawrence wrote:

"Buck Rock Tunnel was denied its birthright and destined never to feel the rumble and vibrations of the thundering steam engines or the tremor of the moaning diesels. The heavy freight and the people of a growing Oregon passed by its portals but never through. It was forgotten in the onward rush except by the few who seek it out and give it a place in history."

Suspect location  
of Tunnel site is  
sec. 14, T. 40 S., R. 2 E.

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