

**THE LENAPE STONE;  
OR, THE INDIAN AND  
THE MAMMOTH**

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The Lenape Stone; Or, The Indian and the Mammoth by H. C. Mercer

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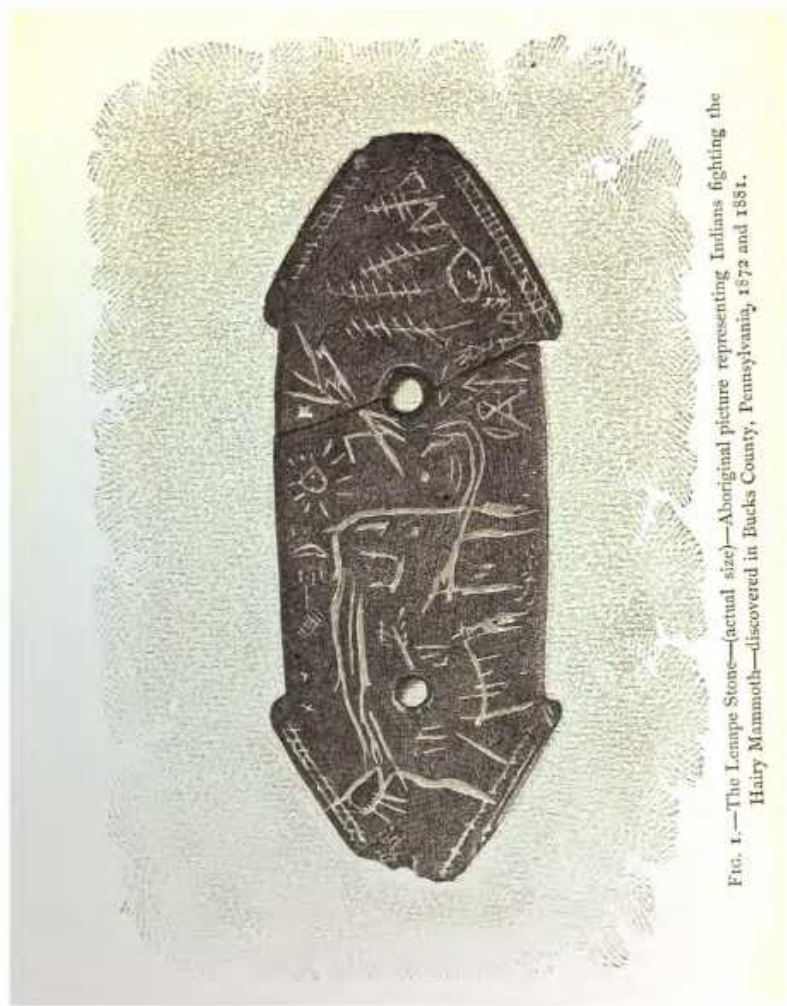


FIG. 1.—The Lenoape Stone—(actual size)—Aboriginal picture representing Indians fighting the Hairy Mammoth—discovered in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, 1872 and 1881.

# THE LENAPE STONE

OR

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## PREFACE.

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IN claiming an impartial examination of so extraordinary a carving as the "Lenape Stone" at the hands of archæologists, the writer has had several difficulties to contend with.

*First*, The fact that the carving is quite unique, it being the first aboriginal *carving* of the mammoth thus far claimed to have been discovered in North America.

*Second*, That no "scientific observer" was present at the discovery.

*Third*, That since its discovery the Stone has been several times cleaned, and that thereby many geological tests of its authenticity have been rendered impossible.

*Fourth*, That within the last few years, and particularly in Philadelphia, serious frauds have been perpetrated upon lovers of Indian relics.

These considerations may well have been sufficient to prejudice the mind of a stranger against the alleged wonderful Indian relic, yet they should in no case suffice to prevent, on the part of the archæologists, a thorough and impartial examination of all the evidence pertaining to its discovery.

In presenting this and other evidence, the writer has



wished only to be impartial, and to be led by the facts as they have presented themselves, and for the examination of which his opportunities have been peculiarly favorable.

In his knowledge of the neighborhood and its people (his home), an acquaintance with all the persons concerned, and very frequent visits to the Hansell Farm, nothing has yet occurred to shake his faith in the unimpeachable evidence of an honest discovery. Yet should any fresh light be brought to bear upon the subject, however at variance with this opinion, it will be welcomed.

The appearance in America of a carving of the hairy mammoth, presumably the work of our aborigines, if not a surprise to students of archæology, would certainly be no less interesting than the French discoveries of some twenty years ago; while the ready connection of the work with the Indian of comparatively recent times, the appearance of human figures in the carving, and of many symbols which seem related to highly important branches of archæological study, would awaken a more general and enthusiastic interest in the Stone, than has been felt for any other prehistoric representation of the great elephant.

A disbelief in its authenticity would leave us with an interest, not inconsiderable, in the unknown person who, after months of careful study and preparation, could have conceived and executed so remarkable a fraud.

## THE LENAPE STONE.

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IN the spring of 1872, eight years after the discovery of the famous mammoth carving in the cave of La Madeleine, Perigord, France, Barnard Hansell, a young farmer, while ploughing on his father's farm, four miles and a half east of Doylestown, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, saw, to use his own words, a "queer stone" lying on the surface of the ground, and close to the edge of the new furrow. The plough had just missed turning it under. He stopped and picked it up; it was the larger piece of the fractured "gorget stone," in fig. 1, (frontispiece). By wetting his thumb and rubbing it he could see strange lines and a carving representing an animal like an elephant, but without troubling his boyish head much about it, he carried it several days in his pocket, and finally locked it up in his chest, where, along with his other relics, arrow-heads, spear-points, axes, and broken banner stones, thrown in from time to time as he found them on the farm, it remained until the spring of 1881, when he sold it to Mr. Henry Paxon, son of a well-known resident of the neighborhood, then a youth of nineteen, and with a fancy for collecting Indian antiquities, in whose pos-

session it still remains.<sup>1</sup> At the moment of the purchase no particular attention had been paid to the carvings, and the new owner was not certain that he had noticed the mammoth while at Hansell's house, or until a few hours later, when he had brought home his trophies and shown them to his father, who distinctly remembers calling his son's attention to the rude outline of an elephant upon the stone.

But without doubt the singular part of the story is the unexpected finding of the smaller piece of the fractured stone a few months later. After many ineffectual searches for it in the intervening years, it was picked up by Hansell while corn-husking with his brother in the same field and at the same spot where nine years before the first piece had been found. This luckily discovered fragment Hansell presented to Mr. Paxon. Several persons of the neighborhood had seen the stone at Mr. Paxon's house both before and after the discovery of the second piece, but it was not until both parts had been some months in his possession that any unusual interest was attached to it even by him.

Some time in July, 1882, Captain J. S. Bailey, of the Bucks County Historical Society, to whom the writer in preparing the present article must acknowledge his great indebtedness, and who first called serious attention to the archæological value of the stone, made it the subject of a paper read before the Society, but since that time,

<sup>1</sup> See Hansell's sworn statement in the appendix.