

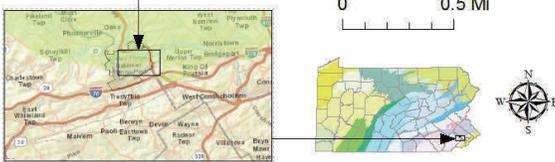


PORT KENNEDY BONE CAVE MONTGOMERY COUNTY



Location

Valley Forge National Historical Park, 1400 North Outer Line Dr., King of Prussia, Pa.; Chester and Montgomery Co., lat: 40.10146, lon: -75.42543 (parking); Valley Forge 7.5-minute quadrangle



The Port Kennedy quarry has long been out of use. It was first a victim to groundwater flooding in 1896 that stopped collection work. Later, a company used the site as a dump for its waste product that contained asbestos. Ultimately, the quarry was filled in but not forgotten. Valley Forge became a national historical park in 1976.

See “Recommended Reading” below for more details about the fossils and recent re-discovery of the bone cave. Most of the fossils are stored at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia; however, a few of the fossils are on display at the visitors center at Valley Forge. Admission is free to enter the park.



Recommended Reading

- Daeschler, E. B., Lamanna, M. C., and Carfioli, M., 2005, On the trail of an important Ice Age fossil deposit, Rediscovering the Port Kennedy Cave (Middle Pleistocene), Valley Forge National Historical Park, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania: [Park Science, vol. 23, no. 2](#), p. 31-34
- Hojdila, J., DeMayo, T., Baughman, S., Bechtel, T., and Carfioli, M., 2005, The long-lost cave has been found!, [Park Science, vol. 23, no. 2](#), p. 35-36.
- Wiswall, G. C., 1993, Valley Forge National Historical Park, Montgomery and Bucks counties—The geologic history: Pennsylvania Geological Survey, 4th ser., [Park Guide 8](#).
- For information regarding outstanding geologic features, contact the Pennsylvania Geological Survey: Bureau of Topographic and Geologic Survey, 3240 Schoolhouse Rd., Middletown, PA 17057 717-702-2017 www.dcnr.state.pa.us/topogeo
- Visit the [Valley Forge National Historical Park](#) web page of the National Park Service.

Geology

In the early 1870s, workers at a limestone quarry near the village of Port Kennedy uncovered a rich cache of Middle Pleistocene fossils (approximately 750,000 years old). Local scientists were called in, and ultimately renowned paleontologists Edward Cope and Charles Wheatley were among those who published reports on the fossils. The discovery remains as one of the most important mammal fossil finds in North America. The site was a fissure trap, probably originating as a collapsed cave that formed a steep-walled sinkhole in a forest. The quarry workers broke into the fossil debris from the side (see sketch below). The fissure was steep enough to be a trap for large animals, including giant ground sloths, saber-tooth cats, short-faced bears, peccaries, and mastodons. Plant, insect, reptile, and bird fossils also were recovered. More than 1,200 fossils were found.



Portion of original sketch by Charles Wheatley. Fossils were concentrated in 18" of organic clay at Section "B" and 6" below in red clay.