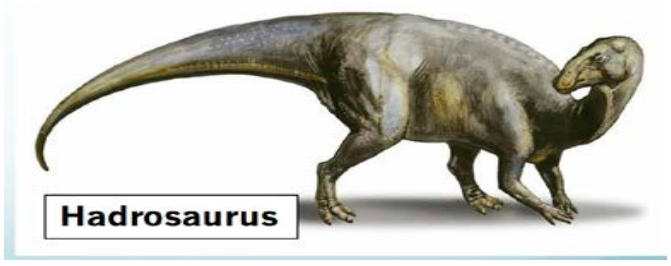
Stratford's History

respectfully submitted by Carole Dadino, Stratford Historian (CaroleD444@gmail.com)

THE FIRST RESIDENTS OF STRATFORD, NJ

As we research the history of Stratford, we usually begin with the Indigenous peoples identified as the Lenape (Delaware) Indian tribes. Locally, the Turkey Clan of the Leni-Lenapi. The history continues with Giovanni de Verrazano who, around 1524, became the first European to explore New Jersey. Then on to the first early settlers, like the Dutch and Swedes who, beginning in 1650, put down roots, mainly, in Salem and Cumberland Counties. History records many of the first settlers in Camden County were persecuted English, Irish, Welsh and Scottish Quakers, mostly from Pennsylvania. As new arrivals continued to establish residences on farmlands, small villages like White Horse (part of Stratford), and towns like Haddonfield, their names have been recorded on deeds and other documents. Yet, little is referenced in regards to our earliest residents, trilobites and stromatolites.

Fossils excavated throughout southern New Jersey, indicate intermittent incursions of the sea. Stratford was once covered with a shallow sea, and marine life flourished. Fossils of brachiopods, shark teeth, corals, and microscopic organisms indicate that the waters were warmer than those off the coast today. Mosasaurs, sharks, and squid-like animals swam the seas, while clams and oysters thrived on the sea floor below. Insect and leaf fossils indicate that, at times, low-lying areas were covered by vegetation. Footprints preserved in the sedimentary rocks and fossilized bones, excavated during development, indicate that dinosaurs were the next inhabitants to roam the Stratford area.



Over 150 years ago, New Jersey was a hotbed of dinosaur discoveries. While scattered bones were being excavated in Europe, the partial, skeletal remains of a dinosaur were excavated a from a quarry in Haddonfield. It was an 8-foot-tall, 14-foot-long duck-billed dinosaur called Hadrosaurus and was soon labeled New Jersey's, official state fossil. In 1866, the very first tyrannosaur, Dryptosaurus ("tearing lizard") was discovered by renowned paleontologist Edward Drinker Cope right here, in New Jersey. Unfortunately, Dryptosaurus was never as famous as its cousin, Tyrannosaurus Rex.

Behind a Lowe's home improvement store in Mantua Township, N.J., a quarry pit may contain insights as to the mass elimination of New Jersey's dinosaurs. Back then, about 66 million years ago, the oceans were higher and this part of southern New Jersey, including Stratford, was a shallow sea. The quarry pit was once the sea bottom, and one particular layer about 40 feet beneath the surface contains a bounty of fossils. A professor of paleontology and geology at Rowan University, theorizes the layer is a "mass death assemblage." He believes it may be the only known collection of animal remains that dates from the mass extinction itself, after the impact of a meteor off what is now the Yucatán Peninsula in Mexico.

Tens of thousands of years ago, ice sheets advanced and retreated over New Jersey, and sea levels fluctuated as the glaciers alternately grew and melted. Mastodons, mammoths, and other mammals tramped across the swamps and woodlands of New Jersey, in front of the advancing and retreating ice sheets. Remains of these early inhabitants have been periodically recovered from various New Jersey townships, often in the wake of construction projects. Many anthropologists have theorized that the extinction of the Mastodons and Mammoths was caused by climatic change. As the climate changed, so did the vegetation, meaning mammals had less food available to them. Other anthropologists theorize, the extinction is a combination of both climate change and the arrival of the Paleoindians. Their hunting of these giant "elephants" may have been one more stress, one that they couldn't overcome, contributing to their final extinction.

Mastodon



Note: As construction begins on the Senior Living Complex, on Laurel Rd., it would be interesting to see if dinosaur fossils are found in the Marl. Maybe they will let us check it out, at the end of each day. Any Volunteers?

SEASONAL HINTS *from Code Enforcement*

Lawn and Yard Maintenance: Chapter 8.32.080 – Landscaping
Premises with landscaping and lawns, hedges and bushes shall be kept trimmed and kept from becoming overgrown and unsightly where exposed to public view.

Trash, Yard Waste, and Debris Removal: Chapter 8.32.080 – Exterior Maintenance
It shall be the duty of the owner or operator to keep the premises free of hazards, which include but shall not be limited to the following: Refuse, brush, weeds, broken glass, stumps, roots, obnoxious growths, filth, garbage, trash and debris.

Pool Maintenance: Chapter 8.44.130 - Enforcement
Any nuisance which may exist or develop in or in consequence of or in connection with any private swimming pool, portable swimming pool, wading pools, tank or plunge shall be abated and/or removed by the owners.

Parking on Front Lawns: Chapter 10.16.020a – Prohibited Parking
The parking of automobiles, buses, motorcycles, trailers and other vehicles in the front yard of lots within the borough is prohibited at all times.

REMINDER – LEAF PICK UP AT CURBSIDE IS OVER FOR THE SEASON. PLEASE BAG YOUR LEAVES AND PUT THEM WITH YOUR REGULAR TRASH. THANK YOU!