

October 4, 1963

Dr. Robert R. Miller  
Museum of Zoology  
University of Michigan  
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Dear Dr. Miller:

My friend, Professor Clark Hubbs of the University of Texas gave your address to me and said that you might be able to help in the following matter.

One of my sharp-eyed students of Rice University discovered an unusual fossil last year, while we were on a field trip in connection with a course I am teaching at Rice. The fossil came from the Middle Eocene Weches Formation from a locality in Leon County, Texas, that has been visited by me frequently. As this fossil is the first of its kind to be found, it is evidently very rare.

After much searching of the literature, it has now been recognized as one of the bony scutes from the lateral row of scutes on the body of Acipenser. Fossil sturgeons are very rare, indeed, and usually represented by one or a few scutes, at best. Nevertheless, they are rather important as a record of the antiquity of the genus. As far as I know, no Eocene Acipenser has been recorded from North America. In England, where meticulous collecting of fossils has been going on for more than 160 years, only a few scutes and a spine have been found in the Eocene (compare White, E. I., 1931, *The Vertebrate Faunas of the English Eocene*: British Museum, v. 1, p. 75-77, figs. 117-120; and Anonymous, 1963, *British Cenozoic fossils*: British Museum, 2nd edition, p. 83, pl. 29, fig. 4). The Texas specimen needs to be described to furnish a fossil record for North America. Incidentally, the specimen came from marine glauconite marl deposited a good distance from the nearest shore.

Would you by any chance have some surplus lateral bony scutes of Acipenser? And, where can I find in the literature a detailed description of these scutes so that I can tell which is the anterior and which is the dorsal margin of the scutes?

I would appreciate your help.

Sincerely yours

H. B. Stenzel

HBS:csr

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