

Museum honors enthusiasts that found mammoth

BY JILL TATGE-ROZELL
KENOSHA NEWS

Without the work of two amateur archaeologists, the Kenosha Public Museum wouldn't have a towering mammoth as its centerpiece.

"If it wasn't for Phil Sander, we wouldn't have been able to relocate the mammoth which spurred the construction of our new museum," museum senior curator Dan Joyce said during a ceremony by the Wisconsin Archaeological Society Sunday in honor of Sander.

Sander, 93, received the Lapham Medal, awarded for distinguished service in archaeological research. The award is named after Increase Lapham,

Wisconsin's first scientist who compiled the first reports about state plants and was the first to chronicle the state's geography. Lapham is most famous as the founder of the National Weather Service.

"The first medal was presented in 1926," Wayne Hazlett, business agent for the society said. "In 75 years, 53 medals have been awarded. It is the highest award our society can present."

Also in attendance at the ceremony was Dave Waison, another amateur archaeologist whom Joyce attributes the mammoth discovery to.

"It was Dave who noticed the cut marks on the bones," Joyce

said, adding that it is those marks which were used to prove the mammoth had been hunted by Paleo-Indians 12,000 years ago.

It was Sander's map that led them back to the site where bone piles, butcher marks and ceremonial ocher were found. It was the first documented mammoth east of the Mississippi River that shows the interaction between man and mammoth. He has donated these maps and corresponding slides to the museum.

State Archaeologist Robert Birmingham, who was also presented with a Lapham Medal Sunday, said the society is based on the close-knit relation-

ship between amateur and professional archaeologists.

"When the society was founded, the profession of archaeology did not exist," Birmingham said. "There is a tradition of non-professional archaeologists being the backbone of archaeological research in Wisconsin."



Phil Sander

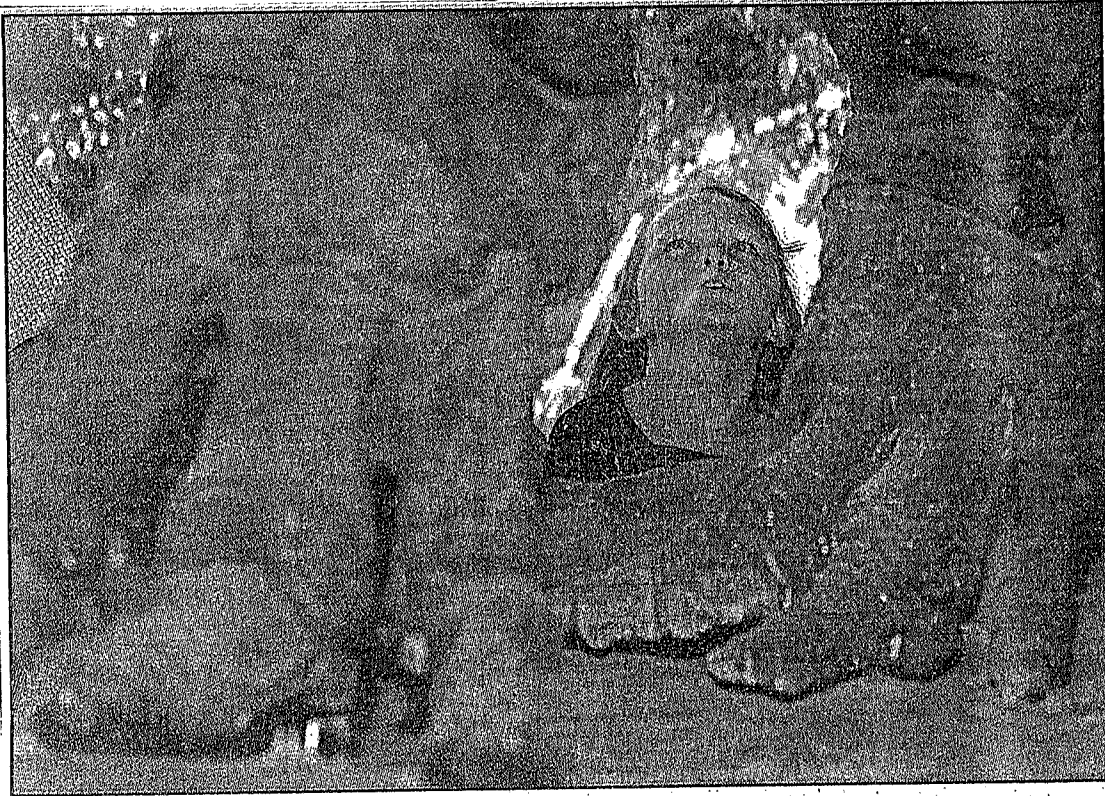
It was Birmingham's predecessor, Charlie Brown, who put the desire in Sander to study local ecology and antiquity. Brown visited Sander's high school in 1926 and encouraged him to learn all he could about his own county.

"It started as a hobby," Sander said. "I would go and search for arrowheads. I would visit farmers who had collections and search the Des Plaines, Pike, and Fox river banks."

As a boy, Sander lived on Seventh Avenue near 80th Street. He would frequently walk from his home to the Illinois border, between which there were no homes or roads at the time. He and friends would have campfires on the beach and build huts out of dogwood to sleep under. His playground was the Chiwaukee Prairie, of which he has written a 40-page guide.

Sander has received many other honors including a Special Recognition Award from the Wisconsin Chapter of the Nature Conservancy; a Conservation Medal from the Daughters of the American Revolution; and an award from the Des Plaines River Chapter of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation for his lifetime contributions to conservation in Wisconsin.

Other people who received the Lapham award Sunday included Jeffrey Behm of Oshkosh and Thomas Pleger of Menasha. It is the first time anyone in the state has been given a medal since 1998.



KENOSHA NEWS PHOTOS BY BRIAN PASSINO

Alexis Blount peers up Sunday at the Kenosha Public Museum's mammoth from between its toes.



Danny Ruffolo, left, Devon Lynn, middle, and Dalton Ruffolo experiment Sunday with the musical instruments at the Kenosha Public Museum.