

Smithsonian Institute
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{Today's Date}

Jerry Montgomery
1907 Church Street
Poplar Grove, IL 60104

Dear Mr. Montgomery

Thank you for your latest submission of the "*Hominid skull*" to the Institute. We have given this specimen a careful and detailed examination, and regret to inform you that we disagree with your theory that it represents conclusive proof of the presence of Early Man in Boone County two million years ago. Rather, it appears that what you have found is the head of a Barbie doll, of the variety one of our staff, who has small children, believes to be Malibu Barbie.

It is evident that you have given a great deal of thought to the analysis of this specimen. However, we do feel that there are a number of physical attributes of the specimen that might have tipped you off to its modern origin.

First, the material is indeed plastic. Ancient hominid remains are typically fossilized bone. Second, the cranial capacity of the specimen is approximately 9 cubic centimeters, well below the threshold of even the earliest identified proto-hominids. Third, the dentition pattern evident on the skull is more consistent with the common domesticated dog than it is with the ravenous man-eating Pliocene clams you speculate roamed Northern Illinois during that time.

Without going into too much detail, let us say that the specimen looks like the head of a Barbie doll that a dog has chewed on. We must deny your request to have the specimen carbon dated. To the best of our knowledge, no Barbie dolls were produced prior to 1956 AD, and carbon dating is likely to produce wildly inaccurate results.

We eagerly anticipate your trip to our nation's capital that you proposed in your last letter. We are particularly interested in hearing you expand on your theories surrounding the trans-positating fillifitation of ferrous ions in a structural matrix that makes the excellent juvenile *Tyrannosaurus rex* femur you recently discovered take on the deceptive appearance of a rusty 9-mm Sears Craftsman automotive crescent wrench.

Yours in Science

Harvey Rowe
Curator, Antiquities