

# How Do You Get a Whale in Vermont? The Unlikely Story of Vermont's State Fossil

Jeff Howe



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**How Do You Get a Whale in Vermont? The Unlikely Story of Vermont's State Fossil** Jeff Howe In 1849, a gang of railroad workers racing to build the first railroad across Vermont stumbled upon the fossil bones of a mysterious animal buried deep in sticky, blue clay. A local natural historian was consulted who quickly and correctly declared the bones to be those of a beluga whale. But with one question answered, a dozen more sprang up. How did the bones of a small, white whale end up buried ten feet beneath a rural Vermont farm field, two mountain ranges and over 200 miles from the nearest ocean? Why did two of the most significant fossil discoveries in 19th century New England occur in Vermont on consecutive summers? And how would these discoveries fit into the rapidly evolving scientific debate over glacial ice ages, evolution and the history of the Earth? How Do You Get a Whale in Vermont? is the story of an ancient whale that captured the imagination of an entire State and went on to become Vermont's official State Fossil.

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