

# The 3-Eyed Monster Of Pomona's Clay Pit

The diggings at Gulf indicate we once  
had climate similar to Arizona.

By DeWITT CARROLL

A gigantic land upheaval that created the Piedmont started a chain reaction which 185 million years later startled scientists and gave Pomona Corporation a source of materials for vitrified clay pipe.

Far-fetched? Not at all. It wasn't until the company's Pomona Pipe Products Division started digging clay at its Gulf plant that geologists got their surprise.

When the earth crumpled up the Piedmont, reaction was felt from here to New Jersey. Enormous pieces of land fell beneath the surface. One was bounded by Goldston, Carthage, Sanford and Moncure. In these "grabens," or basins, geologists found for the first time the bones of monsters previously unknown east of Texas and Arizona.

One was a three-eyed dicynodont, *Placerias gigas*. The third eye was on



Here is an artist's conception of how a relative of the Gulf monster may have looked. This is *Kannemeyeria*, a Triassic dinocephalian of Southern Africa; unlike the Gulf creature, this one does not have tusks. (Sketch from "The Fossil Book," copyright 1958 by Carroll Lane Fenton and Mildred Adams Fenton. Published by Doubleday & Company, Inc.)

top of its head (see cut). Some paleontologists think this pineal eye could distinguish light from dark, but do not know whether it could see objects. Six feet long—the size of a grown bull—*Placerias* had a beak like a turtle, big tusks, and an armored body. Some apparently ate meat; others, vegetation. Incidentally, human beings have a pineal gland inside their brain, thought to be the remnant of a third eye.

Until Pomona found the skull at Gulf, the creature had been known in the United States only in Arizona. Remains of an eight-foot horned toad, previously unknown east of Texas, were found at Gulf. Pomona Corporation gave its fossils to the American Museum of Natural History. Among others found were cousins of the giant *Tyrannosaurus Rex*, and *Phytosaurs*, ancestors of the crocodile. The latter's long, narrow jaws were armed with a deadly array of sharp teeth. Along with fossil plants, remains of the monsters support belief that North Carolina and Arizona once had similar climates.

Digging in the clay pit at Gulf is now at a point where earlier ancestors of the monsters lived, but Pomona pipe has another link with the past. This time it's a mere 4,722 years. Fired clay pipe has been found in ancient ruins, earliest of which was the Turkish city of Bismya, dating back to 2750 B.C. — some 1,300 years before Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt. One Roman aqueduct has been delivering water through such pipe for 2,400 years without cease.

No wonder Pomona guarantees its pipe 100 years.



Top view of the skull of *Placerias gigas* found at Pomona's clay pit at Gulf shows socket of third eye in center of skull. Pomona Corporation gave its fossils to the American Museum of Natural History.